

The Ripline

www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Union/BUHABS/

Issue 5

2000/2001

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRISTOL UNIVERSITY HOT AIR BALLOONING SOCIETY

The 15th anniversary of BUHABS is coming closer, and your committee have been working hard to produce a packed programme. Read all about it on this page. On the following pages are details of other upcoming social events and the BUHABS 2001 AGM. This issue there is also an article detailing how Hot Air Balloons saved the world during the mid eighties. Finally, BUHABS managed to fly twice during January, as well as attend the Icicle balloon meet. Find the pictures inside. John Burnett

BUHABS **15**TH BIRTHDAY

WEEKEND OF 10 / 11 MARCH 2001

Believe it or not, BUHABS has been flying for 15 years, in which time we have had five balloons, 15 pilots and literally over a thousand members flown. We want to make the 15 year celebrations special and are organising a weekend of events, focussed on both ballooning and socialising.

Saturday 10th March, 0630, Flight from Wills Hall, Stoke Bishop.

This will be a flight with the current BUHABS balloon, plus balloons flown by former BUHABS pilots or other friends of BUHABS, probably about ten balloons in total. (Weather permitting - a 'phone confirmation will be organised)

Saturday 10th March, 1400-1800, BUHABS balloons on display at Wills Hall, Stoke Bishop.

We will get the old BUHABS balloons out for an airing and culminate with a mass inflation of all five. This will be the first time ever that all five BUHABS balloons are inflated together. Lots of crewing help needed please! There will also be tethered rides for all! Tea break at the bacon wagon nearby on the Downs. (Weather permitting, - Sunday afternoon is reserve)

Saturday 10th March, 1930, BUHABS 15th anniversary dinner - The Muset, York Road, Clifton. (BYO).

A quality dining experience for only £17. Please send your booking forms (enc.) back to John Burnett a.s.a.p. - we hope not to turn people away, but there is a limit on numbers. A £5 deposit is required for each person.

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Sunday 11th March, 1030, BUHABS champagne breakfast at The Buttery, Bristol Docks.

Bacon sandwich and a glass of bubbly provided for all that come along. (In all weathers)

Sunday 11th March, 1400-1800, Reserve slot for BUHABS balloons inflation's.

If you are able to join us for some or all of these events, please let Paul Spellward or Lee Hooper know.

Paul Spellward -

Lee Hooper -

THE BUHABS AGM 2001

WEDNESDAY 07 MARCH 2001 - 1930 - EPI BAR, UNION

Every year union societies hold an AGM to elect a new committee for the following academic year. For those of you who are considering joining the committee for the 2001/2002 academic year, below are some of the positions available and their responsibilities. If elected to a committee position, your role will usually commence in the Autumn term. Don't worry, no specialist ballooning knowledge is needed.

The President: The president's responsibility is the smooth running of the society. The position involves helping other committee members when needed, chairing meetings (usually) and keeping members informed about the societies activities. The position is only open to those holding a student union card.

Union Treasurer: The union treasurer is responsible for the three accounts which get audited by the Union every April. This post is not open to finalists.

Secretary: The secretary is responsible for liaison with sponsors and other external bodies, keeping minutes and other official society business. The secretary is usually the first point of contact with the Society and has to be able to channel information and requests for action quickly and efficiently to the rest of the committee.

Social Secretary: The social secretary is responsible for organising out social events and for producing the newsletter (although everyone on the committee will help out).

Sponsorship Treasurer: The sponsorship treasurer is responsible for the money we receive from our sponsors. This includes the payment of the balloon insurance and funding of any events we do for the sponsors. The position also involves keeping the flying accounts.

Transport Officer: The transport officer is responsible for cleaning and maintenance of the van and compound.

Other Posts: Other posts are given to non-elected co-opted members of the committee. These vary from time to time, but have included Membership Secretary, Balloon Maintenance Officer, Assistant secretary and newsletter editor.

FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL - 

NAUGHTY HOWARDS QUIZ

JOINT EXPLORERS CLUB AND BUHABS PUB QUIZ

MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2001 - 8:00 PM - MANDELA BAR, UNION

Hopefully you will have recieved this issue of The Ripline before this event happens. If you didn't, I hope you went and had a good time! The last Explorers Club Quiz was attended by over fifty people, and was very amusing indeed. Although fairly random as pub quiz's go, with rounds based on chocolate wrappers and microbiology, my team still managed to come second. This promises to be a very amusing evening, so do come along and meet some explorers (!).

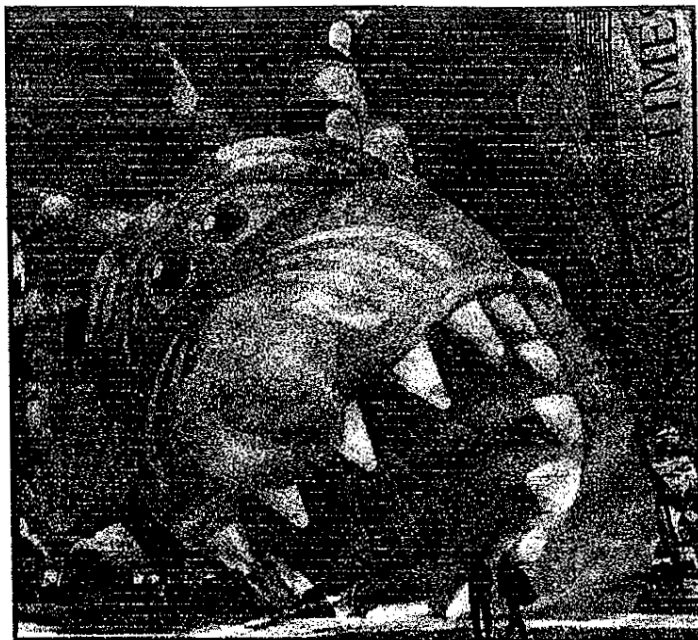
INDOOR BALLOONING & PANCAKES

WEDNESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2001 - 7:30 PM - MR1, UNION

This classic BUHABS event involves getting the balloon out inside and watching a few bad BUHABS videos. A good opportunity to learn about hot air ballooning if you haven't had the chance to get out with BUHABS yet. We're also going to try and organise someway of cooking a few pancakes this year. Whether we pull this off or not is still to be determined, so don't keep your hopes up too high. You know, I reckon the government should implement a Mash Potatoe Day. I'm a bit of a Mash fan myself (especially with carrots and onions mashed in), and would therefore relish an opportunity to hold a BUHABS potatoe mashing session.

NewsLINE

OUT OF DATE BALLOONING NEWS PLAGIARISED HERE FIRST

**BIG BEAST OF A BALLOON**

He may be a beast of a balloon, but Trump is no scary monster. The latest stunning creation to leave the Bristol factory of Cameron Balloons was the rising star of a balloon festival in Switzerland. As pilot Malcom Deer's burner breathed fire into his belly, Trump soared into the sky on its first flight at the Chateaux D'Oex festival watched by round-the-world balloonists Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones.

One not too petrified onlooker remarked that although Trump was scary, the Bassets Allsorts Balloon was way more freaky. She said her husband was receiving counseling from a dramatic incident last year when Bertie Basset floated over their Swiss Chalet.

GIANT BEER BALLOONS FINISHED ON SCHEDULE

Staff at Bedminster based Cameron Balloons have completed work on three giant beer balloons. They had just six weeks to put them together for German brewer Krombacher. And because one balloon is much smaller than the other two, the artwork had to be scaled down carefully to make sure they matched. And now the challenge is for a haulage company to ship them all the way to Germany. Balloons commercial manager Lindsay Sadler said "This shipment should go smoothly, but it will constitute a very large load for the haulage company, with each balloon weighing about 160 to 230kgs." Around 85 per cent of balloons made by Cameron are exported.

BUHABS IMAX THEATRE VISIT, THURSDAY 25 JANUARY 2001

A REVIEW OF;

EXTREME

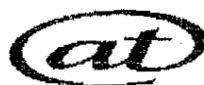
Having been to the IMAX in Bristol three times before, I was very much looking forward to this film. Reviews I had read suggested the large screen format was ideal for watching extreme sports. What we were treated to for nearly an hour was quite literally breath taking.

To start there was surfing in Hawaii, where waves of 40ft were being braved. Despite slightly cheesy comments, you couldn't help have a deep respect for these people. Following on from the surfing we had Ice-Climbing. One shot which zoomed out of a guy free climbing up a frozen waterfall literally turned my stomach. Continuing on the frozen media theme came the Snowboarders and Skiers. The scenery was

brehtaking, especially on the large screen. I never really realised how fast they go, or how near vertical the slopes are! The 'Dudes' featured in this film were often world champions in their field, but even they were not infallible. Several times we saw them fall from their various boards.

Towards the end was Rock-climbing and windsurfing. The windsurfing was very elegant, I didn't know you could do loop-the-loop on a wind surf. The incredible footage along with the excellent soundtrack make this a film I would recommend to anyone. Don't have a large tea before you go though!

John Burnett

IMAX
THEATRE**Bristol**

FLIGHT REVIEW

SATURDAY 19 JANUARY 2001

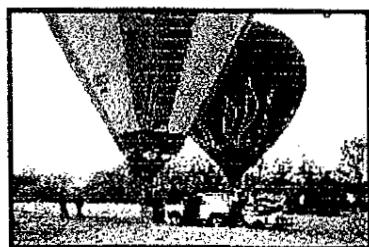
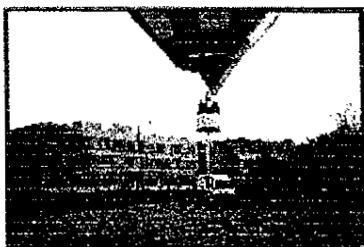
This was a flight from Ashton Court, just outside Bristol, and lasted 1 hour and 35 minutes. Unfortunately it was rather misty over the city so the flight consisted of hovering around Ashton Court whilst various pilots had a go at the burners. When the balloon eventually landed outside the Mansion, the retrieval van was not allowed to drive on as it was deemed too muddy! This was the first flight for Elsie and Lester.



FLIGHT REVIEW

SUNDAY 28 JANUARY 2001

This time B5 took off from the railway field just outside Bath, a favoured BUHABS launch site. The flight lasted 1 hour and 15 minutes. First the balloon drifted over Bath before moving south to land about 6 Km from Bath near Radstock. The landing was a bit tricky as the field was muddy, ploughed and icy! The crew finished the trip off with bacon butties at the 'Rest-a-while' at Keynsham Rugby Club. This was Sarah's first flight.



A FEW NOTES ON SIGN-UP

In recent weeks the number of people signing up for flights has been dwindling. We appreciate that the weather was, well, atrocious last term, but it does seem to be improving as the two flights in January prove. It can be pretty disillusioning when you sign up several times and never get to fly. However, a record is kept of everyone who signs up, and when extra people are required to fill crews these regular signers are the first to be called. So pop in the pub on Thursday lunch time or sign-up later, spring weather is just around the corner. Anyone who is having trouble signing up should email Simon on; [REDACTED]

ICICLE BALLOON MEET 2001

PHOTOS FROM SUNDAY 07 JANUARY 2001



BUHABS managed to put in an appearance at the Icicle Balloon Meet earlier this year. Flying had to be cancelled due to bad weather on the Saturday, but forecasts bode well for the Sunday. Unfortunately a decision had to be made on the field not to fly. Unfortunately in these situations safety has to be put first, despite other balloonists deciding to fly. Reports suggest everyone enjoyed themselves nonetheless.

TOM LICKE'S DODGY PIC'S

<http://www.britneyspears.ac/lasers.htm>

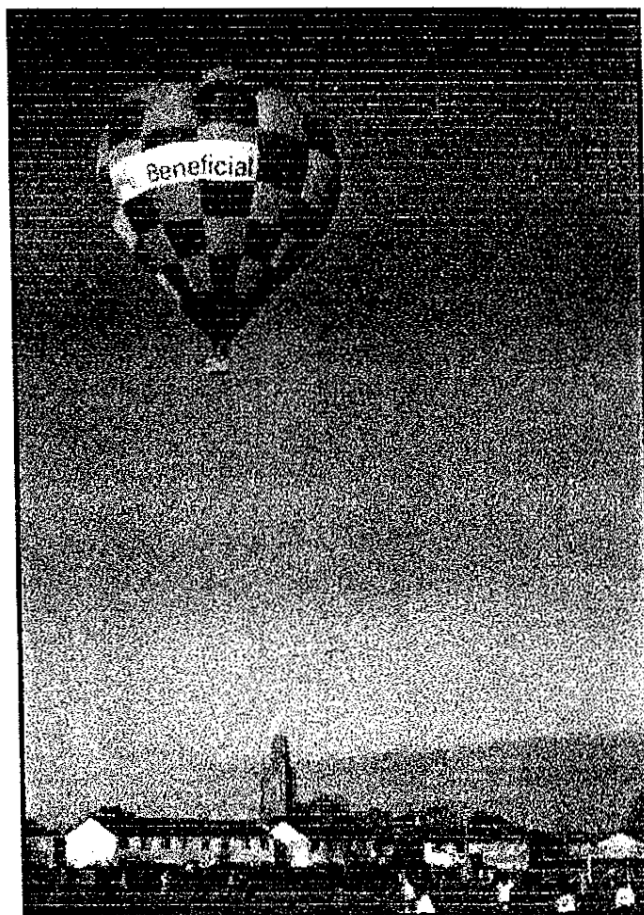
All those male Physics students out there will love this one. Not only do they get to gawk at Britney, but get to learn something too. Ladies, I'm afraid you will have to make do with the pictures of Simon on the back page.

VINTAGE BUHABS

Whilst compiling montages for last years Freshers Fair, my Father looked at my photos of B5 with some puzzlement. He's quite a photographer you see, and with great excitement went a-rifling amongst his vast slide collection. He came out with several photos he had taken a few years ago from our spare bedroom window in Yatton. We live quite near Bristol you see, and he'd only caught our beloved balloon landing in the football ground outside our house.

I have been recently been told the facts surrounding this flight. It took place on the 14th of December 1997 in the morning, and was the first (and only so far) of balloons to take off from Bristol International Airport. The flight lasted two hours and they had to wait until half time until they could land. It must have been a slow flight, as Yatton is only 5Km from the Airport. This was a special flight, as not only was it B5's 66th flight, but Paul Spellwards 900th flying hour.

I was working at the local Mushroom Farm at the time, so missed all the excitement. A peculiar portent for the future though I think.



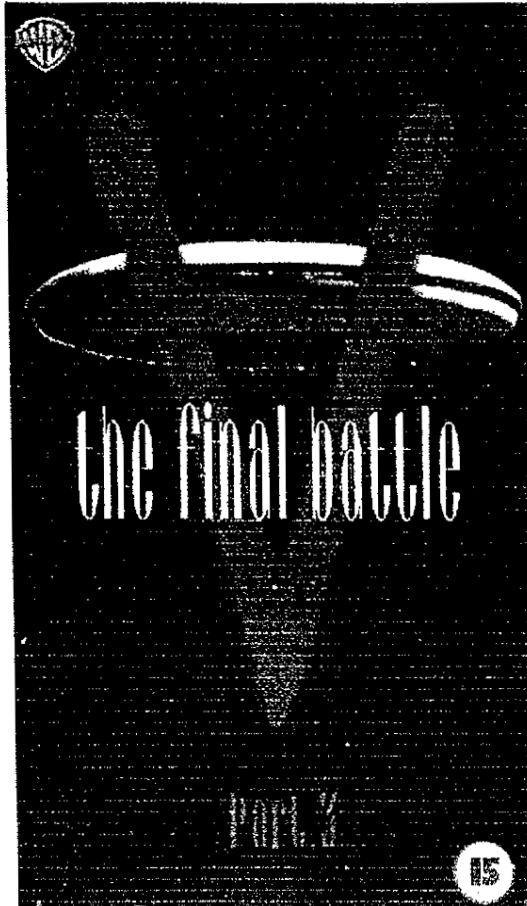
HOW HOT AIR BALLOONS SAVED THE WORLD OR - AN EXCUSE TO WRITE ABOUT AN 80'S SCIENCE FICTION SHOW

When V - The Final Battle was aired in 1984 it drew a larger audience than the Olympic Games. It's new spin on the alien invasion mythos captivated the imagination of people all around the world. Or maybe they just found the lures of the evil alien leader, Diana, just too addictive. Whatever peoples reason for watching, they would have all seen the hot air balloons in the final part, drifting over the American Desert.

The original V mini-series lasts nearly eight hours and is split into five parts, the last three being 'The Final Battle'. The story starts as many alien invasion stories do, by showing seemingly unrelated people upto their ordinary business. Some are rock-climbing, some are sat on their lawn, and some are filming war in El Salvador (!). It's not long until they all begin staring into the sky as large spacecraft descend from the heavens.

The aliens, known as the Visitors, claim to be visiting Earth to manufacture chemicals to help clean up pollution on their own planet. Some people are suspicious from the beginning, as the visitors among other things look rather human and seem to scare wildlife. Over the course of the first episode the Visitors establish themselves into the daily life of Earthlings. It takes the journalistic urges of one reporter, Mike Donovan, to steal aboard one of the motherships and find out the truth.

On board he finds out many startling and disturbing facts. The Visitors were not here to manufacture



chemicals, but to steal all the worlds water. Mike finds huge vats deep in the belly of the ships, containing millions of litres. Water isn't the only thing he finds. The Visitors aren't only thirsty but very hungry. People who had been disappearing hadn't been held for questioning, but frozen as food (see picture).

The final revelation comes as Mike tries to flee the mother ship. He catches one of the Visitors getting undressed. It only turns out that they are infact big lizards dressed up as humans. Once escaped Mike teams up with others who are forming an international resistance.

V was the brain-child of Kenneth Johnson, and nearly broke the banks of Warner Brothers. Most of the budget assigned to this sci-fi extravaganza went on special effects, as the actors were hardly Oscar nomination material. In the lead roles were Marc Singer and Faye Grant. Marc Singer went on to star in classic sci-fi trite like 'Beast Master', whereas Faye Grant, well, who knows? Most of the actors must have come from American soaps and I think that is where they must have



Flying a bit too close.



Up, up and away.



Ready for launch.



The red dust.



Balloons everywhere.

remained. One actor of note who appeared in V was Michael Ironside. He went on to appear in many Paul Verhoeven films like Robocop, Total Recall and Starship Troopers. Lucky chap.

Anyhow, back to the story. During all the alien bashing shenanigans the resistance get up to, one of the young fighters manages to get seduced by one of the sly Visitors. Going by the name Bwian (no, no, Brian), he acts under the orders of the evil Diana to try and produce a Visitor-Earthling cross breed. Robin, the young lady in question, ends up giving birth to a seemingly normal child and a weird green alien thing. After a few days the unfortunate alien baby dies. After research on the corpse, the resistance scientists discover it was killed by a harmless form of E-coli found in humans.

The resistance work out that by distributing this bacteria about the globe everything will become poison to the aliens and they will have to leave. The original plan was to deploy the bacterial red dust from jet engines. However, the visitors learn of this plan through a spy they have planted. Therefore the resistance have no choice but to drop bags of the red stuff from hot air balloons. In the final part of V we are treated to nearly five minutes of hot balloon action. We see Michael Ironside operating a burner; several strong chaps lugging around the red dust and

many pretty shots of balloons. I think most of the footage is stock. Especially the ones over desert, which I expect were taken from a small balloon meet that happens in New Mexico every year.

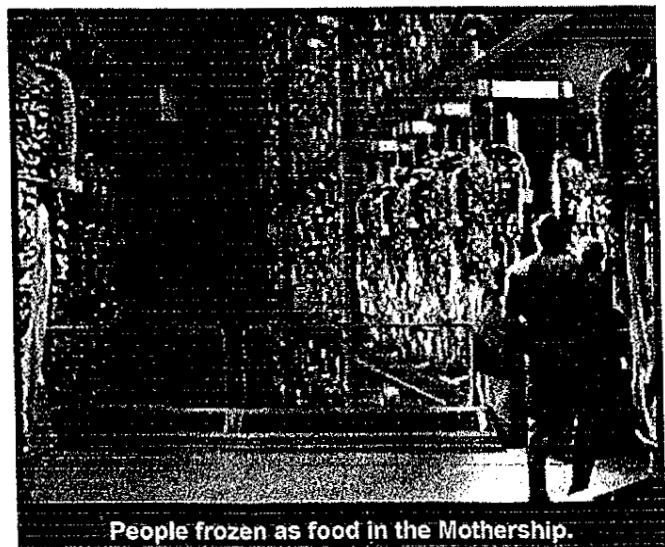
You wouldn't think hot air balloons would be capable of bringing down an alien race able to travel light years in huge space ships. So next time you are frustrated that a balloon only goes in a straight line - remember, they have their uses.

The original V mini series was so popular that Warner Brothers commissioned thirteen standard length television episodes to follow. However, they seemed to literally lose the plot. Whereas the original was conceived by a sci-fi guru, the TV series was dreamt up by a room of Hollywood executives. These guys chucked story line out of the window and thought; 'if there's aliens and guns, people will watch it'. How wrong they were and the TV series bombed. I think the mistake they made was not to make it fun. Other series of the time, such as Buck Rogers in the 25th Century were of the same premise, but were a bit silly at the same time. Who can forget Tweaky? I would recommend V to any body. Despite dodgy acting, its an intriguing story. I even have all the videos myself, but give the TV series a miss.

John Burnett



Visitor Motherships over Los Angeles.



People frozen as food in the Mothership.

AM I CAMP OR NOT?



As a famous Klingon Warrior once said; 'Revenge is a dish best served cold'.
Campness ratings from one to ten to [redacted] please.

SPECIAL RETRIEVAL

EMAIL OUR OPERATIVES ON: [redacted]

EXCLUSIVE! - BUHABS PUT SCREENING

This month Special Retrieval have been working extremely hard to get you these exclusive pictures. Stored deep in a vault that is usually only accessed by a cigarette-smoking man, these pictures are about as rare as they get. It has always been understood that only someone special can become BUHABS Pilot Under Training. Yet these distressing photos show that the Don's require a little more than 'How much do you like ballooning? - A lot'.



Special Retrieval can exclusively reveal that as part of the PUT selection process candidates are wired up to a brain monitoring machine for the night. Candidates have to report to a special chamber deep in the depths of Cameron Balloons and upon arrival are fed a thought enhancing drug. This is fed to them via copious quantities of Corn Flakes coated with Coco Shreddies. As they sleep the night away, thier dreams are monitored for images of large inflatable objects. Those who pass leave the centre remembering nothing, those who don't don't.

If you have any comments, queries, or quarrels with The Ripline (or if you feel like flexing your literary talents and writing an article yourself!) please don't hesitate to email me (John Burnett) at the following address: [redacted]